



United States Senator  
**Richard Shelby**  
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



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**BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE:  
BACK ON THE DEFENSE**

*By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)*

With President Bush's appointment of nine Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commissioners on April 1, 2005, the United States begins another round of BRAC that is expected to be the cleanest sweep of military holdings in over a century. The Pentagon has estimated that up to twenty-five percent of U.S. bases will be closed or realigned.

The BRAC Commission will spend the next six months analyzing facts and figures to determine the fate of many of our nation's military installations. I have worked closely with the Alabama Congressional Delegation, the state and our bases' communities to present a solid case based on merit and actual national security contributions. I firmly believe that Alabama's four Active Duty military facilities are well positioned going into the 2005 BRAC round and have strong arguments for staying open.

Redstone Arsenal is the heart of the Army's extensive missile and space research and development (R&D) programs. It is the home to the US Army Aviation and Missile Command, the Space and Missile Defense Command, numerous Program Executive Offices, and the Missile Defense Agency and thus continues to be the center for missile and space development activities within the Army.

Fort Rucker is fundamental to Army Aviation development and training and prepares the Army aviation force for its worldwide mission. The facility is in the forefront of research and development for new technologies and new techniques to combat America's worldwide war on terrorism. Fort Rucker develops the Army's aviation concepts, doctrine, organization, training, and soldier requirements. In addition to training all Army rotary pilots, Fort Rucker has also been training all Air Force helicopter pilots for more than three decades.

Anniston Army Depot may be best known for housing chemical weapons. However, its primary mission is repairing the M-1 Abrams tank and virtually every other tracked vehicle in the Army. Its repair and maintenance facilities and capabilities for tracked vehicles are not found anywhere else in the United States. As our Armed Forces continue their work in Iraq and Afghanistan, the contributions of the Anniston Army Depot are critical.

Maxwell Air Force Base and Gunter Annex, home to the Air University, provides the full spectrum of Air Force education, from pre-commissioning to the highest levels of professional military education. The 42nd Air Base Wing provides the foundation upon

which the Air Expeditionary Force, Air University, and the Maxwell Community build success. Further, the Headquarters Standard Systems Group (SSG) is also located at Gunter, and is responsible for data processing and communications computer systems and capabilities for major commands and Air Force bases around the world.

Accompanying the development of the defense industry in Alabama has been the evolution of a network of universities, research facilities, and industrial expertise that cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the United States. Every major defense and aerospace technology company has a presence in Alabama. As a result, Alabama provides worldwide leadership in missile technology, launch capabilities, and aviation technologies.

The simple fact is that Alabama represents a critical mass of unique assets and capabilities essential to protecting our nation's security interests. Our local communities have done a tremendous job informing the Department of Defense about Alabama's bases, and we must not rest until BRAC concludes. I am confident that, when armed with information about Alabama's bases, the BRAC Commission will understand the critical role our bases play in support of our nation's defense.

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**FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: APRIL 21, 2005**



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